

COMMISSION ON AGING

Minutes

September 9, 2013

Present: Commission members Helen de Keijzer, Don Gumaer, Laura Smits, Nina Daniel, and Bruce Lorentzen; Weston Senior Activities Center Director Wendy Petty and Program Coordinator Pam Wilson; Social Services Director Charlene Chiang-Hillman; Dial-A-Ride Driver Gordon Green; and SWCAA liaison Meta Schroeter.

Helen convened the meeting at 9:20 a.m.

July Minutes: Not all four Commissioners who had attended the meeting were present, so the discussion/approval of the July minutes was postponed until October.

SWCAA: Meta reported that the last meeting was held on June 12, 2013 at headquarters in Bridgeport. Marie Allen reported that the federal government is encouraging outreach to seniors who live alone. There is great concern about the mental health of these seniors and various efforts to reach out to them are being emphasized this year. More ideas and help in this regard will be offered this fall. Open enrollment dates for Medicare and Medicare D will be October 15-December 7. Pat Knebel announced that the new grants application program is underway and while there are some small issues, the new review process is much less time consuming. The SWCAA "Live Well" program has been successful at several centers and will continue to be offered. Westport has selected a contractor for the senior housing planned on the Baron's Property.

The subject of how widespread scams are becoming was raised and Helen asked when the upcoming scam program will be presented in Weston. Pam said that it's set for 10:00 a.m. September 25th at Norfield Parish Hall before the senior lunch.

Transportation: Gordon distributed a report showing ridership from May–August. He mentioned that the van is now 6 years old and that we should be considering a replacement. Bruce commented that some town funds have already begun to be earmarked for this purpose. There was a discussion regarding the usage of our mid-sized bus versus a large rented coach bus and the availability of Roy as the back-up driver for trips in the former.

Social Services Report: Charlene reported that more and more of her caseload is now older seniors, some of who are struggling with various issues, including some which have the potential of creating a safety hazard. She has been working closely with the Police and the EMTs who are aware of the situation. Discussion ensued about how best to help this population of seniors.

Senior Center Director Report: Wendy reported that both she and Pam are busy planning for the Alden Sherman Classic Car Show fundraising event on September 22, which includes increased publicity. The group discussed the possibility of moving the

Center to Emmanuel Church as well as senior feedback on the potential move. The majority of the group favors it at least for the near future since it would resolve the parking challenges at Hurlbutt, which impacts attendance of programs. Nina suggested that if and when the Center move is definite we plan a “grand opening” party. Pam and Wendy will present new Center names that have been submitted at our next meeting. They suggested that we might wait to change the Center name until we are sure where the Center’s home will be and maybe not even then because so much other change will be occurring. The move may happen as early as November. **Logistics and New Program Ideas:** Meta suggested we have a cooking program with Chef Kevin Serra who has worked with other senior centers in the area. Helen suggested that we explore ways to provide lunch to seniors at the Center on days other than Wednesday when the senior lunch is at Norfield. Nina suggested that we might add canasta and some kind of dance instruction. Charlene and Helen both commented that we should keep offering the popular Pickleball. Another possibility is Ping-Pong. Pam reported that there is a planned trip to the Culinary Institute in November. Other possibilities include The Whitney in New York City and the Florence Griswold Museum in Old Lyme. The Friends have approved subsidizing 3 trips from their funds: one trip in November and two in the spring.

New Business: Helen asked the group to think about what features we will be aiming for in any new van such as greater riding comfort and fuel efficiency. Helen also distributed her draft of a mini-resource guide for the group to review with the aim of including it as a single-page (two-sided) insert in the next Center newsletter. Discussion ensued and she will incorporate various suggestions.

Meeting adjourned at 11:05.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Smits